

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

March 7, 2006

5:00 PM

Chairman Gatsas called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Shea, Garrity, Pinard, Duval

Messrs.: V. Lamberton, G. Mackie, F. Rusczek

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Communication from Virginia Lamberton, Human Resources Director, on behalf of the Quality Council, requesting a revision to the current Bright Ideas Program Policy.

Virginia Lamberton, HR Director, stated the Chairperson from the Quality Council is here – Gene Mackie and he has some helpers with him. Mike Roche is with him.

Gene Mackie, Chairperson, Quality Council, stated I have with me Mike Roche who is one of the Vice Chairs and we have the rest of our supporting staff back here. Another of the Co-Chairs of the Quality Council is John Donovan, Colleen Driscoll from the Police Department. She is on the sub-committee for the Bright Ideas Program along with Mike and John. What we are here tonight to bring before you is a revision to an existing program. The Bright Ideas Program has been in effect for 2 ½ - 3 years. We have tried just about everything we could to build up interest for employees to participate in the program. Basically what we are trying to do is get ideas submitted that would save money for the City, that will improve proficiency or will be involved with improving safety. Those are the three main areas that we are talking about. In addition to saving money, there could also be suggestions coming in that could increase City revenue. In the period of time that the program has really been in effect and we have had forms and everything out there on the City's Intranet, we have had only seven responses. At the barbecue that we had we tried to find out how to get people more involved and how do we get the City employees involved in doing what the Mayor has asked the citizens of Manchester to do and that is to come up with ideas on how to improve government and make it more economical. We have been working on a revision to the Bright Ideas Program and we have changed the flow of

documentation so that the Mayor is now in the loop of suggestions. We have revised the Evaluation Committee, which is in the document. These are the people who will look at the ideas and say yea or nay in addition to a department head. The Evaluation Committee or the department head can say okay this idea is worth such and such. Dollar values are in the document provided and then from there it goes to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for a decision on whether or not you agree. That is pretty much an overview of the program.

Alderman Shea asked how long have you folks been working on revamping this particular situation.

Mr. Mackie answered I would say for about six months. We only meet once a month.

Alderman Shea stated personally I think it is very worthwhile and I commend the people working on that. I know you are giving your time and efforts.

Alderman Shea moved to approve the revision. Alderman Duval duly seconded the motion.

Ms. Lamberton stated it could really be a great program. I think that the Council has really worked hard at trying to come up with new ideas themselves to make this a better policy. In part the reason why it is here today is I want to say, not to contradict Gene, but I would be it was probably a year ago that we met with the former HR Committee to talk about rewarding employees for ideas and suggestions and the HR Committee actually sent the Council back to the drawing board to try and come up with a more efficient and effective way to give employees with good ideas some kind of a monetary award. The policy even provides for simply a certificate and a presentation before the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. So it is not always money. It is from a certificate all the way up to money. I would really encourage you to approve this amended policy.

Chairman Gatsas asked who has the final say.

Ms. Lamberton answered the final say is with the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Chairman Gatsas asked so before somebody gets a \$500 stipend that would be presented to the full Board.

Ms. Lamberton answered yes.

Alderman Duval stated I was looking through it yesterday and again this afternoon before the meeting and I think you are to be commended for your efforts. I think it is a worthwhile endeavor and I think whenever we can inspire City employees to make a contribution to increase efficiencies and in particular one thing I am interested in is the lowering of our insurance costs because we know those costs can be rather dramatic and if we can just save a hand full of injuries over the course of a year I think it can mean significant dollars saved for the people that bear the burden, namely the taxpayers. I think the endeavor is well worth the effort you put in and I think the collaboration between the HR Department and the Quality Council has been good and I appreciate it.

Chairman Gatsas called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 4 of the agenda:

Communication from Virginia Lamberton, Human Resources Director, on behalf of Denise M. van Zanten, Interim Director of the Library, requesting the reclassification downward of the Administrative Services Manager, salary grade 16, to an Administrative Assistant III, salary grade 14.

On motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Duval it was voted to approve the request.

Chairman Gatsas addressed Item 5 of the agenda:

Communication from Virginia Lamberton, Human Resources Director, on behalf of Kevin Dillon, Airport Director, requesting the reclassification and new class specification of Canine Handler Supervisor, salary grade 17.

Chairman Gatsas noted that Kevin Dillon could not be here and asked that this item be tabled.

On motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard it was voted to table this item.

TABLED ITEMS

6. Communication from Joan Porter, Tax Collector, relating to part-time employees.

This item remained on the table.

7. Communication from Virginia Lamberton, Human Resources Director, on behalf of Fred Rusczek, Public Health Director, requesting reorganization of the management structure of the Health Department, the reclassification of two positions and the establishment of one full-time position and one part-time position.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Duval it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Fred Rusczek, Public Health Director, stated before you you have a reworked spreadsheet that shows the comparative costs between filling the Deputy position and the proposed restructuring that we have submitted. Also before you is a letter from the Mayor. I know that question came up last time as to whether or not the Mayor's Office support this so you have a letter from the Mayor's Office supporting it. We are withholding the filling of the part-time clerical position, which results in savings from this restructuring of about \$40,000.

Chairman Gatsas asked could you repeat that.

Mr. Rusczek answered the resulting savings is about \$40,000/year.

Chairman Gatsas asked isn't that a little different than Ms. Lamberton's calculation.

Mr. Rusczek answered the bulk of that is because we were seeking to have a part-time Customer Service Representative at a cost of \$23,300. That will not be filled at this time so that is \$23,000 in addition to the savings that we showed from hiring two Public Health Specialists as opposed to the Deputy position.

Chairman Gatsas asked so you removed that person.

Mr. Rusczek answered correct.

Chairman Gatsas asked Ms. Lamberton do you agree with that number now.

Ms. Lamberton answered I was unaware of the Mayor's letter to be honest with you. I know Fred said that he was going to get one but I gave the numbers to you by last Monday because that was my deadline. I can see the date of the Mayor's letter but it must have been after my letter and I wasn't copied on it. If you add the two together...if you look at the chart that I gave you and you add the \$23,000 it is about \$40,000.

Chairman Gatsas stated your letter was the 24th and the Mayor's letter was the 23rd.

Ms. Lamberton responded I did not see a copy of it.

Alderman Garrity moved to approve the request. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Duval stated I just want to express to Fred publicly that I commend you and your staff for working to restructure the department and bring about savings. There is no issue there and I expressed that to you and I want to make sure that is clear. It is just an observation and the reason I had trepidation in supporting this at the last meeting was that there was a discrepancy between what you were offering for numbers and what Ms. Lamberton had offered for numbers. Just to highlight that and again I am not looking to be critical but I am just looking to get the facts straight so I can be comfortable in supporting this, at the last meeting the savings were approximately \$8,715. I just want to confirm again, if you don't mind, that today you are proposing a restructuring that has a net savings of \$17,600 so there has been a change in the numbers as the Chairman has pointed out.

Mr. Rusczek responded that change was primarily due to the fact that when I ran the first numbers I was looking at the upgrades of two people as promotions and that is one category of pay increase in the City ordinance but in working with Virginia Lamberton afterwards I realized that what they are is reclassifications and not promotions so it is a different pay. That is why that disparity was there.

Alderman Duval asked Ms. Lamberton the \$17,600 number is reliable. We are all set with that number? It jives with what you have and is substantiated?

Ms. Lamberton answered yes.

Alderman Duval stated Mr. Rusczek I understand that you worked with the Mayor's Office, which I think is great. It is a great collaboration. Are you confident that you can efficiently conduct business there without the part-time position?

Mr. Rusczek responded yes. There is some other restructuring that is under consideration with the Mayor's Office, which may require the need for that position down the road. The part-time clerk...what we were trying to do was restore a position that we lost in the budget a couple of years ago. A position that

is critical in billing for Medicaid and performing some of our after hours work. We are working with the Mayor's Office to see what other alternatives there might be down the road.

Alderman Duval stated at the last meeting and I just want to be sure I get this clear but we had talked about the elevation of your two assistants.

Mr. Rusczek responded the two division heads yes.

Alderman Duval stated and I asked the question about the Deputy position being eliminated and I asked if that would be something that you viewed indefinitely or if you would be looking to bring that back down the road should the budget allow or should circumstances change within the department. I thought you had indicated that perhaps at some point you might recommend bringing the Deputy position back or naming one of those assistants as a Deputy at some point in the future. I want to make sure I am clear on that.

Mr. Rusczek replied during my tenure I don't plan on doing that but I can't foretell what might be necessary down the road with a different structure. Hopefully I still have some time left in me but I feel this is a structure that works and is efficient and is all I need. As people grow and as responsibilities change it may be for the next Director that he or she says they need a Deputy. I don't know that but during my tenure I don't plan on coming back with a Deputy position.

Alderman Shea stated Fred I want to compliment you on working together...as a former principal you worked with schools with the nurses and so forth as well as your work and I know that the City needs to have as much health expertise because of the obvious problems we are confronted with, particularly with the possible problem with the flu virus that is coming across with birds and so forth. Certainly we appreciate your efforts and we thank you for that. As a City official I really appreciate the work that you do.

Chairman Gatsas stated the structure chart that I am looking at I notice that when you come down and branch out to the Business Service Officer and the Administrative Service Manager you then have four people beneath that. Where we looked at the distribution in the chart above it, when you do this distribution of these four people it looks like there is a consolidation coming. Is this going to show a higher grade level for these people during the budget or are we looking at the same grade levels because they are in the same positions or are they increasing what they are doing at the Health Department, which would allocate a higher grade level? What I am looking for is I want to make sure that this organizational

chart that we are going to that during the budget process somebody doesn't all of the sudden come forward and say these people are getting more duties so we have to change their grade levels.

Mr. Rusczek responded there are no other changes in the budget process that will increase anybody on this charts pay.

Chairman Gatsas called for a vote on the motion to approve the request. The motion carried with Chairman Gatsas being duly recorded in opposition.

Chairman Gatsas noted I am opposed because it is a new position and I feel we should deal with it during the budget process

8. Communication from Virginia Lamberton, Human Resources Director, requesting the establishment of a new class specification Painter, salary grade 13, and the establishment of two painter positions.

This item remained on the table.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Garrity it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee